# INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

# **COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES** SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

# SIGNIFICANT FORCE INCIDENT EVALUATION

UNIT: DATE: Lancaster Sheriff's Station

TIME:

June 7, 2008, Saturday

0235 hours

LOCATION:

2801 West Avenue L. Lancaster, CA 93534

IAB#:

FO2221612

URN#:

408-14682-1192-145

# NATURE OF INCIDENT:

On Saturday, June 7, 2008, at approximately 0235 hours, deputies responded to ar
assistance request by Unit 111 EM's, Deputy Upon their arrival, deputies saw a
large group of people fighting in the parking lot. Deputy Knight used his vehicles Public
Address system and ordered the crowd to disperse and to leave the area. The crowd
proceeded to comply with the exception of three males. Deputies Knight, and and contacted the three males identified as,
and Jose Valenzuela and detained them. Suspect Valenzuela began using
his cell phone while he was being detained. Deputy Knight attempted to take the cell phone away from Suspect Valenzuela. Valenzuela suddenly turned and with his open palm, struck Deputy Knight in the mouth.
Deputies Knight and attempted to control Suspect Valenzuela by utilizing control
holds. Suspect Valenzuela was taken to the ground by Deputies Knight and
Deputies and helped hold Suspect Valenzuela's feet as Deputies Knight and
nandcuffed Suspect Valenzuela. All three suspects were subsequently arrested
at the location.

Suspect Valenzuela was transported to Antelope Valley Medical Center where he was treated for a fractured right ulna (elbow). Suspect Valenzuela was approved for booking and transported to Lancaster Station. Deputy knight suffered a minor injury to his right ring finger.

Dr. Ulner reported that Suspect Valenzuela sustained fractured right ulna. The following review is based on written documentation, interviews of witnesses, involved deputies, and medical staff.

# INVOLVED PERSONNEL:

KNIGHT, SHANNON- Deputy Sheriff, Employee #

Lancaster Station

FOR I

Employee Work History:

Date of Employment:

09-13-1991

Date Assigned to Unit:

11-01-1997

Prior Founded Force Incidents:

Deputy Sheriff, Employee #

Lancaster Station

FOR I

**Employee Work History:** 

Date of Employment:

Date Assigned to Unit:

Prior Founded Force Incidents:



Deputy Sheriff, Employee #

Lancaster Station

FOR I

**Employee Work History:** 

Date of Employment:

Date Assigned to Unit:

Prior Founded Force Incidents:



- Deputy Sheriff, Employee #

Lancaster Station

FOR I

**Employee Work History:** 

Date of Employment:

Date Assigned to Unit:

Prior Founded Force Incidents:



Deputy Sheriff, Employee #

Lancaster Station

FOR I

**Employee Work History:** 

Date of Employment:

Date Assigned to Unit:

Prior Founded Force Incidents:



- Deputy Sheriff, Employee #

Lancaster Station

FOR I

**Employee Work History:** 

Date of Employment: Date Assigned to Unit:

Prior Founded Force Incidents:



# INVOLVED SUSPECT:

# VALENZUELA, JOSE

Sex: Male Race: Hispanic

Characteristics: 5'9" 155 Black / Brown

Date of Birth: August 30, 1978

Booking Number: 1501-602

Charge: 69 P.C. Assault on a Peace Officer

Injury: Fractured right ulna

Suspect Valenzuela Consolidated Criminal History System

Offenses include:

**IAB Note:** A copy of Suspect Valenzuela's criminal history is included in this report (Exhibit C).

#### **DEPARTMENT WITNESSES:**

Whalen, Gregory - Deputy Sheriff- Bonus I, # Lancaster Station FOR I

Dawson, Theresa - Sergeant, #

Lancaster Station

FOR I

#### NON-DEPARTMENT WITNESSES:



#### INVOLVED EMPLOYEE STATEMENTS:

**Deputy Shannon Knight,** # was interviewed on July 3, 2008 at 2337 hours, by Internal Affairs Bureau Sergeants Jack Ramirez and Irma Chevalier. The interview was conducted at the Lancaster Sheriff's Station. Deputy Knight agreed to be interviewed without representation, and the interview was digitally recorded for review. The following is a summary of Deputy Shannon's view of the incident.

Deputy Knight said on the indicated date and time he was working Unit 113 EM's. He said he responded to the location in regards to a large fight call and assistance request from Unit 111, Deputy He said as he arrived, he saw a crowd of approximately 40 people in the parking lot. Several of the people were yelling at each other and pushing each other. He said as the crowd saw deputy personnel, they began separating. The security guards at the location were telling everyone to leave because the bar was closing (Papa's Bar-BQ Pit).

He said they stayed in the parking lot in order to keep the peace and to prevent any more fighting among the group. Deputy Knight said he made announcements over his vehicles P.A. telling the group to disperse from the parking lot. He said he saw a group of four males hanging around the parking lot. He drove towards the group and made another announcement over his P.A. for them to leave. Deputy Knight said the three suspects turned their heads toward him and laughed. He said Suspect waived his arm at him as if he wanted him (Knight) to leave him alone. He said Suspect Valenzuela bent over with his back toward the deputies and shook his butt. He said all three of the suspects looked back at them (deputies) and began laughing.

Deputy Knight said he again ordered the suspects to leave via his P.A., but they still refused to comply to his orders. He said he and Deputy drove toward the group in order to detain them for refusing to leave the commercial center after being advised to leave

(Violation of 9.12.020 © LMC). He said as they approached the suspects, and started to go in one direction (south) and Suspect Valenzuela started walking north toward the Stater Brothers Market. Deputy Knight said he told Suspect Valenzuela to stop and for him to walk back to their location. Suspect Valenzuela refused to comply to his commands and continued walking, at the same time waving his hand back them.

Deputy Knight said they followed Valenzuela to the sidewalk of Stater Brothers. He said Valenzuela turned around and quickly put his cell phone up to his ear. Deputy Knight said he told Valenzuela to put the phone away, but he refused. He said he could smell a strong odor of an alcoholic beverage coming from his breath and person. He said he also saw that Valenzuela's eyes were glassy and slightly bloodshot. He said Valenzuela spoke in a loud voice and Knight noticed his speech was slurred, possibly in violation of being drunk in public.

Deputy Knight said he attempted to detain Suspect Valenzuela. He said he reached up with his right hand and took a hold of Valenzuela's cell phone from his right hand. He said Valenzuela immediately struck him in the mouth with his right palm. He grabbed his right wrist with his right hand in order to control and to prevent Valenzuela from hitting him again. He said he pushed his right shoulder with his left hand forcing Valenzuela to face away from him. Valenzuela made his right hand into a fist and Knight could feel the muscles in Valenzuela's arm tighten. Deputy Knight said he told Valenzuela to stop fighting and to put his hands behind his back, but Valenzuela refused to comply.

Deputy Knight said he grabbed Valenzuela's right wrist with both of his hands in an attempt to place him in a rear wrist lock. He said he saw Deputy grab Valenzuela's left arm. He said there were other deputies also assisting. He said he heard Deputy tell everyone to take Valenzuela down to the ground. He said Suspect Valenzuela began twisting his torso back and forth in an effort to free himself. Suspect Valenzuela started yelling "Go ahead, try and take me down." He said Valenzuela continued to resist their efforts to control him by moving his arms violently, in an effort to break free from their grip.

Deputy Knight said as they pushed Valenzuela forward, he swept Valenzuela's right leg with his left leg, causing Valenzuela to go to the ground. He said as he hit the ground, He jammed his right ring finger into the concrete. While Valenzuela was laying on his stomach, he continued to violently pull with his right arm, in an attempt to free himself. Deputy Knight said they were able to overcome Valenzuela's resistance and took him into custody. Deputy Knight said Suspect Valenzuela started to tell him that his right arm was hurting and that it might be broken. Deputy Knight said Suspect Valenzuela was transported to Antelope Valley Hospital for treatment and booking approval. He said he reported the force he had used to Sergeant Dawson.

IAB Note: Refer to Exhibit A, for a copy of Deputy Knight's arrest report. Also refer to Deputy Knight's transcribed interview.
Deputy , # was interviewed on January 3, 2009, at 0148 hours, by Internal Affairs Bureau Sergeants Jack Ramirez and Albert Maldonado. The interview was conducted at the Lancaster Sheriff's Station. Deputy agreed to be interviewed without representation and the interview was audio recorded for review. The following is a summary of Deputy perception of the incident.
Deputy said he and his partner Deputy responded to the parking lot of Papas Bar, in regards to an assistance request, persons fighting. While they were monitoring people leaving the parking lot, he saw Deputies Knight and attempting to detain a male (Later identified as Suspect Valenzuela). He said Valenzuela was walking away from the deputies despite their orders telling him to stop. Deputy said as Deputy Knight came within arm's distance of Suspect Valenzuela, Valenzuela suddenly turned around and swung his cell phone which was in his right hand. He said he saw Deputy Knight flinch backward. He said Suspect Valenzuela started to flail and swing his arms at Deputies Knight and
Deputy said Deputy Knight grabbed Suspect Valenzuela's left arm and he grabbed Valenzuela's right arm. He said he then grabbed Valenzuela's left arm and attempted to place it behind him in order to handcuff him. He said Valenzuela tensed his arms and began yelling and demanding that they (deputies) let him go. He said they were unable to place Valenzuela's arms behind his back due to his resistance. Deputy said he and Deputy Knight verbally agreed to do a team take down of Suspect Valenzuela. He said Valenzuela heard them say they were going to take him down to the ground. Upon hearing this, Suspect Valenzuela began yelling "Yeah, try to take me down." Deputy said Valenzuela refused to comply to their verbal commands to stop fighting. He said they took Valenzuela down to the ground and Valenzuela's chest made contact with the concrete. He said assisting deputies had a hold of Valenzuela's feet.
Deputy said he pulled Valenzuela's left arm behind his back and Deputy was able to handcuff him. He said Suspect Valenzuela continued to resist their efforts to control him. He said Suspect Valenzuela yelled out that his right arm was hurting. He said Valenzuela relaxed his body and allowed deputies to bring his right hand behind his back for handcuffing. He said Valenzuela was taken into custody without further resistance.
I.A.B. Note: Deputy stated that in his report Suspect Valenzuela had shouted out that his left arm hurt. He said he just noticed the error while reviewing his supplemental report prior to this interview. He said his report should have said that Valenzuela had

shouted that his right arm hurt (Refer to page #2, last line of his report). He explained that on the day of the incident he was tired. He said he had worked at least a twelve hour shift because of this incident. He said he failed to catch the mistake on June 7, 2008. said Valenzuela was transported to Antelope Valley Hospital where he Deputy was treated by Doctor Atilla Ulner. Suspect Valenzuela sustained a small bone chip in his right elbow. Doctor Ulner approved Suspect Valenzuela for booking and he was transported to Lancaster station. Deputy said he reported his use of force to Sergeant Dawson. The interview was concluded at this point. I.A.B. Note: Refer to Exhibit B, for a copy of Deputy supplemental report. Also refer to Deputy transcribed interview. Deputy was interviewed on June 7, 2008, at approximately 2335 hours, by Internal Affairs Bureau Sergeants Jack Ramirez and Irma Chevalier. The interview was conducted at the Lancaster Sheriff's Station. Deputy agreed to be interviewed without representation and the interview was audio recorded for review. The following is a summary of what transpired. said he and Deputy Knight were going to attempt to detain Suspect Valenzuela in order to conduct a person drunk in public and a loitering investigation. He said they attempted to contact Suspect Valenzuela as he was walking away from them. Deputy said he ordered Suspect Valenzuela to stop and to turn around. Suspect Valenzuela continued to walk away at the same time waving his arms back at them. said he told Valenzuela again to stop, but he ignored them again and Deputy continued to walk away from them. He said Deputy Knight grabbed Suspect Valenzuela's right arm. He said Valenzuela was holding a silver object (Later identified to be a cell phone). He said Suspect Valenzuela swung his right arm striking Deputy Knight in the mouth. Deputy said he grabbed Suspect Valenzuela by both arms. He said other deputies assisted nim. Deputy said as he held onto Valenzuela's arms, he (Valenzuela) began to pull his arms out of his grip and attempted to walk away. Deputy said Suspect Valenzuela then began to yell out take me to the ground, at the same time resisting deputies efforts to control him. said Deputies Knight and Deputy conducted a team take down of Suspect Valenzuela. He said Deputy Knight ordered Valenzuela to place his hands behind his back but Valenzuela continued to resist by clenching his fists and pulling his arms away. Deputy said he grabbed onto Valenzuela's wrists and placed the handcuffs on him. said they ordered Suspect Valenzuela to place his hands behind his back several times during the incident, but he refused to comply. He said after the incident

Deputy knight complained of pain coming from his right index finger. He said he also saw

to Sergeant Dawson. I.A.B. Note: Refer to Exhibit B, for a copy of Deputy supplemental report. Also see Deputy transcribed interview. was interviewed on June 7, 2008, by Internal Affairs Deputy | Bureau Sergeants Jack Ramirez and Irma Chevalier. The interview was conducted at the Lancaster Sheriff's Station. Deputy agreed to be interviewed without representation and the interview was audio recorded for review. The following is a summary of what transpired. said he was conducting a patrol check in the parking lot of Papas Bar. He said he saw a large fight involving approximately forty people. He said he requested assistance and additional deputies arrived on scene. While in the parking lot, Deputy said he saw Deputy Knight detaining Suspect Valenzuela for being drunk in public. Deputy said as he was driving toward Deputy Knight's location, he saw two males who were still standing in the parking lot after being told to leave via the Public Address System announcements. He said he contacted both males (Later identified as Suspect's in regards to why they were not leaving the location after being told and to. said told him he was watching his friend (Valenzuela) who was being detained by Deputy Knight. Deputy said he told to leave the location because he was now in violation of loitering. Deputy said while he was talking to he heard an argument taking place behind him. He said he turned around and saw Deputy Knight and assisting units attempting to control Suspect Valenzuela who was on the ground. He said Valenzuela was thrashing his body around and resisting the deputies efforts to control him. Deputy said he ran over to assist Deputy Knight and the other deputies. He said Valenzuela was kicking his legs attempting to free himself. He said he grabbed onto Valenzuela's right ankle with his right hand in an effort to keep Valenzuela from kicking. He said he placed his right knee on top of Valenzuela's right foot so he would be unable to kick his leg. Deputy said Valenzuela was taken into custody without further incident. He said he reported his force to Sergeant Dawson. Deputy said Suspect was subsequently arrested for being drunk in public and loitering. I.A.B. Note: Refer to Exhibit B, for Deputy supplemental report. Also see his transcribed interview.

that Deputy Knight's mouth was red and swollen. He said he reported the force he used

Jack Ramirez of Internal Affairs Bureau. The interviewed without representation and the interview was audio recorded for review. The following is a summary of what transpired.
Deputy said he responded to a backup request at Papas Bar. He said upon his arrival, he saw people running in the parking lot. He said he saw units with their ambers on in the parking lot next to the Stater Brothers Market. He said as he drove to their location and exited his patrol car, he saw deputies struggling with a male on the ground. He said the deputies were telling the male to put his hands behind his back. Deputy
said the male was kicking his legs and flailing his arms in an effort to get deputies to release him. He said the male continued to kick his legs so he said the assisted by holding down his right leg so he could not kick the deputies. Deputy said the suspect was taken into custody at that point. He said he did not see any of the deputies strike the suspect. He said he reported the force he used to Sergeant Dawson.
I.A.B. Note: Refer to Exhibit B, for Deputy supplemental report. Also see his transcribed interview.
Deputy was interviewed on January 25, 2009, by Sergeant Jack Ramirez of the Internal Affairs Bureau. The interview took place at the Lancaster Sheriff's Station. Deputy agreed to be interviewed without representation and the interview was audio recorded for review. The following is a summary of what transpired.
Deputy said he and his partner Deputy responded to Papa's Barbeque Pit regarding a fight call. He said while at the location, deputies were dispersing the crowd. He said most of the crowd complied and started to leave as ordered. He said while they were waiting for the remainder of the crowd to leave, he saw deputies approaching a male (Later identified as Suspect Valenzuela) on foot. Deputy said he drove their patrol car towards where Deputies Knight and were. Deputy said he exited his car and saw deputies using a firm grip on Valenzuela in an attempt to control him.
Deputy said the suspect was resisting the deputies efforts to control him at the same time yelling, "You can't take me down." He said the suspect appeared to be under the influence of alcohol (smell of alcohol, slurred speech, blood shot eyes). Deputy said the suspect continued to resist the deputies attempts to control him and continued yelling that the deputies could not take him down. Deputy said he grabbed Valenzuela on his left arm (bicep area) with his right hand. He said an order was given to take Suspect Valenzuela to the ground in an effort to overcome his resistance.

He said Deputies Knight, and and himself guided the suspect to the ground. He said while the suspect was on the ground, he continued to resist their efforts to control him and place him under arrest. He said the suspect was subsequently taken into custody. He said he reported the force used to Sergeant Dawson. The interview was concluded.

I.A.B. Note: Refer to Exhibit B, for Deputy supplemental report. Also see his transcribed interview.

#### SUSPECT STATEMENTS:

Suspect Jose Valenzuela was initially interviewed on June 7, 2008, at 0250 hours, by Sergeant Theresa Dawson, The interview was conducted at Antelope Valley Hospital and video recorded.

Suspect Valenzuela stated he was walking in the parking lot towards the Stater Brothers Market when he heard yelling. He said he was talking on his cell phone when someone knocked it out of his hand. He said he got tackled and his right elbow was injured. He said he had been drinking and denied that he had swung at anyone. He said his arm was bent by six people.

IAB Note: Video recording of Suspect Valenzuela's interview is included in this report.

Lieutenant Ruble interviewed Suspect Valenzuela on June 7, 2008, at 1621 hours prior to him bonding out. The interview took place at Lancaster Sheriff's Station and video recorded.

Suspect Valenzuela said he was at Smokies Barbeque Pit with some friends. He said they were going to walk home because they all had been drinking. He said he was walking towards the Stater Brothers Market and talking on his cell phone. He said someone knocked the cell phone out of his hand, then he heard someone say "Hey, hey." He said 5-6 people took him to the ground. He said his right elbow was bent. Suspect Valenzuela said he never heard a dispersal order. He said he did not struggle with deputies during the incident. He said he never resisted and never heard any verbal commands. He said he did hear the deputies say take him to the ground. Suspect Valenzuela said he was not impaired and could have driven home. He said he did not remember hitting anybody and he did not say try and take him to the ground during the incident. The interview was concluded.

I.A.B. Note: Video recording of Suspect Valenzuela's interview included in this report.

#### **DEPARTMENT WITNESSES STATEMENTS:**

Deputy Greg Whalen, # was interviewed telephonically on January 27, 2009. The interview was audio recorded for review. Deputy Whalen said he responded to the parking lot of Papas BBQ in regards to a fight. He said while at the location, he noticed several people leaving after deputy personnel made announcements over their P.A. for them to disperse. He said he saw Suspects and remaining in the parking lot even after the announcements ordering them to leave. He said he saw Deputies Knight and approaching Suspect Valenzuela, who was walking away from them in the parking lot. He said Suspect Valenzuela was waving his arms back in the direction of the deputies. Deputy Whalen said he saw Deputy Knight touch Suspect Valenzuela's right arm. He said Valenzuela jerked his right arm up, then he saw deputies Knight, and other personnel take the suspect to the ground. He said Suspect's were subsequently arrested for being drunk in public and for loitering. The interview was concluded at this point.

I.A.B. Note: Refer to Exhibit B, for a copy of Deputy Whalen's supplemental report. Also review Job # Deputy Whalen's interview. No transcription was available due to problems with the server, per Cron Associates transcription company.

**Sergeant Theresa Dawson,** was interviewed on January 15, 2009, at 0730 hours, by Sergeants Jack Ramirez and Albert Maldonado of Internal Affairs Bureau. The interview took place at Lancaster Sheriff's Station and was audio recorded for review.

Sergeant Dawson said she responded to a fight call at Papa's Grill involving 40 people. She said as she arrived, the majority of the people were leaving the parking lot. She said she remained in the parking lot to monitor the crowd. She said she noticed a radio car close to the Stater Brothers Market. She said it seemed that the deputies were yelling at a group of people because they refused to leave the parking lot. Sergeant Dawson said she drove to their location, and saw deputies fighting with someone on the ground. She said there were two other males (Suspect's and puttern) just south of where the deputies were.

She said from her vantage point, she saw deputies struggling on the ground with the suspect (Valenzuela). She said she saw control holds only. She said Valenzuela was resisting while he was on the ground. She said the deputies were able to place handcuffs on Valenzuela and the suspect was taken into custody. She said Suspects and ran over to where the deputies were and started taking pictures with their cell phone. Sergeant Dawson said were subsequently arrested for being drunk in public and for loitering. Sergeant Dawson said the deputies reported the force they used on Suspect Valenzuela.

She said while at the station, she reviewed the cell phone that the Suspect used to take pictures of the incident. She said when she checked the cell phone, there were no pictures of the incident. The interview was concluded at this point.

I.A.B. Note: Refer to Sergeant Dawson's transcribed interview.

#### NON-DEPARTMENT WITNESS STATEMENTS:

was interviewed by Sergeant Theresa Dawson on June 7, 2008, at 0400 hours. Said he saw officers approaching a male. He said he took pictures with his cell phone, then he got arrested. He said he did not see any force used on the male.

I.A.B. Note: Sergeant Dawson video tape the interview.

was interviewed by Sergeant Theresa Dawson on June 7, 2008, at 0405 hours. Witness said he was at Papa's Barbeque Pit. He said he heard deputies announce a dispersal order because there was a huge fight. He said he saw deputies yelling at Valenzuela then 6-7 deputies tackled him. He said he took pictures of the incident with his cell phone. He said he had been drinking on the night of the incident and was arrested for being drunk and for loitering. He said he did not see anymore force used against Valenzuela.

I.A.B. Note: Refer to video of Witness interview with Sergeant Dawson submitted with this case.

#### SUSPECT INJURIES:

Suspect Valenzuela was transported to Antelope Valley Hospital, located at 1600 west Avenue J, Lancaster, CA 93535. He was treated by emergency room physician Doctor Atilla Ulner. Dr. Ulner advised that Suspect Valenzuela had sustained a fractured right ulna (elbow).

#### **DEPUTY PERSONNEL INJURIES:**

Deputy Knight sustained a sprain in his right ring finger. He also sustained a swollen bottom lip.

#### PHYSICAL EVIDENCE:

No physical evidence was collected at the scene.

#### INVESTIGATORS OBSERVATIONS:

Internal Affairs Bureau Sergeants Ramirez and Chevalier were notified of the incident on June 7, 2008, at approximately 0630 hours.

# WEAPONS USED BY DEPUTY PERSONNEL:

Personal Weapons (hands, knees), Takedown

# WEAPONS USED BY SUSPECT:

Personal weapons (hands and feet)

# PROPERTY DAMAGE:

None

# CRIMINAL INVESTIGATOR and CHARGES FILED:

Investigator:

# Lancaster Detective Bureau

Court:

Lancaster Superior Court

Charges Filed:

148 P.C. filed against Jose Valenzuela, 647 (f) P.C. filed against

Suspect's and

# WEATHER CONDITIONS AND LIGHTING CONDITIONS:

The weather was clear and warm.